

The Status of the Current Food Irradiation Expansion Program in Brazil

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Over the last two years, Tech Ion Industrial Brasil S.A. has been implementing a very ambitious food irradiation program in Brazil, and food irradiation centers are being constructed in many of the major agricultural production areas. Further, the Ministries of Agriculture and Health have developed new legislation on food irradiation, which closely follows the 1997 World Health Organization recommendations of no upper dose limits. Then this legislation is final, Brazil will have the most flexible food irradiation legislation in the world.

The Manaus Food Irradiation Center began operations in January 2000 and is operating at capacity. A number of stored products (wheat, grains, flour, pulses) in which methyl is used for control of insect infestations are now being irradiated instead. As other food irradiation centers come on line, broader use of irradiation will be used on stored products thus enabling less use of methyl bromide and other fumigants.

Three additional Food Irradiation Centers (Rio de Janeiro, Belem, Juazeiro) are currently under construction and are expected to be operational in early 2001. Irradiation processing will afford additional alternatives to methyl bromide, particularly as a phytosanitary treatment for exports of many of Brazil tropical fruits. Also, irradiation will provide an alternative treatment for many fruits that are sensitive to existing treatments.

This paper will update the status of food irradiation program in Brazil and provide some statistical data on the fruit production and exports.